

# THE OCEANS DAY AT RIO+20







# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA)





# THE OCEANS DAY AT RIO+20



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**SPEECH AT THE OCEANS EVENT, RIO+20**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I come to this important forum as Vice-Minister responsible for fisheries and aquaculture activities of Honduras and as Pro Tempore Chair of the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA for its acronym in spanish), which is integrated by the fisheries and aquaculture authorities from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Dominican Republic.

Central America is surrounded by the waters of the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, having more maritime than terrestrial territory, characterized by its high biodiversity, with living marine resources with a high commercial value and which are sources of income, proteins and employment.

In our oceans, both great opportunities as well as great challenges for development exist. Convinced that joint efforts have more chances for success we adopted the First Policy of Integration for Fisheries and Aquaculture, from 2005 until 2015, aimed at establishing a common regional system to increase the integrated participation of the people and contribute to the adequate and sustainable use of the fishery resources and the aquaculture products. The policy has, among other reference tools, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea.

At the same time we are conscious that sustainable use of fishery resources and the benefits obtained from them will endure as long as we have healthy and well-managed oceans at national, regional and global level. At the same time we recognize the effects of overfishing on some resources and the threat posed by climate change, so we try to deal with them in a coordinated way.

For that reason, within the framework of the policy of integration, a new governance model based on the juridical regime of the Central American Integration System, known as the Tegucigalpa Protocol (which allows the adoption of binding agreements) has been applied. Central America already has the first Regulations to develop a Regional Register of the fishing effort of the industry and the aquaculture; for the management of the Caribbean lobster fisheries; for establishing the satellite monitoring system for the fishing fleet; for the prohibition of shark finning and we have a Code of Ethics for Responsible Fisheries.

While the policy and the governance model are young, we are already motivating substantial changes, one of the most evident examples is the simultaneous closed season of the Caribbean lobster from Belize to Panama and the Dominican Republic that we have implemented now already for three consecutive years.

Within this framework of action, an institutional Alliance with the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project (CLME) -supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations- has been established to strengthen the knowledge and expertise in the management of one of the most valuable resources of Central America, which is the spiny lobster. The expectation for this joint effort is to strengthen the new governance model and also seek to broaden the scope to a wider marine area.

For this reason, the presidents of the Central American countries and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have agreed to develop a joint plan of action for the responsible management of the Caribbean Sea migratory fishery resources, in order to progressively expand the regulatory frameworks in force; to develop in a jointly way the monitoring, control and surveillance to deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to explore new production alternatives.

That is why, as a strategy for decreasing fishing effort on those ecosystems with declining resources, practices for a new environmentally friendly aquaculture are being promoted, a strategy that is strongly endorsed by the Government of Honduras.

Mrs. President, Central America grouped in OSPESCA of the Central American Integration System has the full intention to consolidate our integration policies and to identify and promote guidelines that can ensure the proper use of our oceans.

I conclude my intervention by recalling the message from the SICA Secretary-General in occasion of the celebration of the World Oceans 'Day where he emphasized the importance of the protection and proper use of the world's oceans and coasts so that fishery resources continue to be an alternative for protein production, employment and income in the process of ensuring the welfare of the people in proper livelihood conditions for present and future generations.

**Thank you.**



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